



## The race of the Century



*Grundy (right) beats Bustino in 'The Race of the Century'*

If you Google “THAT TRY” you will find what is known as “The Greatest Try of All Time”. Gareth Edwards finished it off after Phil Bennett’s triple side step near his own posts and other immortals combined to decimate the 1973 All Blacks in what was no “Baa-Baas” type exhibition match.

It was a grudge match fought hard by the All Blacks because most of the Barbarians had made up the 1971 Lions who won the series to defeat the All Blacks at home.

In horse racing, is there a “THAT RACE”?

For it to compare to THAT TRY, it would have to be competed for by the best of the best internationally and on a grand stage. The 1986 Arc is the best race for quality I have ever seen, competed for by seven Group 1 winners, but ultimately Dancing Brave won well and none staggered off the pitch, so to speak, like the rugby players.

Boxing shows us the most brutal version of one-on-one competition and if the THRILLA IN MANILA was an extraordinary global event, the 1974 RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE in Kinshasa regularly “wins” the vote as the greatest sporting event of the twentieth century. Horses may sometimes bump each other, or occasionally try to grab a bite, but

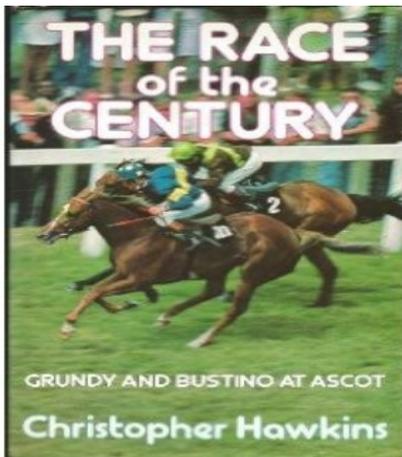
but they do not beat each other about the head to the point of collapse. However, one day at Ascot two great horses ran each other into the ground, not quite to the point of collapse but neither horse was ever the same again.

“THE RACE OF THE (20<sup>th</sup>) CENTURY” as it is still recognised in Europe, and most other places where it could be seen back then, has no rival for speed and intensity of competition. People who have “seen it all” including for example Sir Michael Stoute still today shake their heads in wonder at the 1975 King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes when the budding champion of the Classic generation – the Derby Winner - takes on his more senior champions over the classic distance.

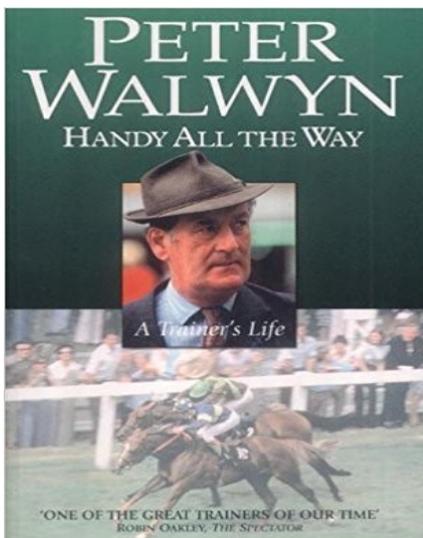
It all came flooding back this week upon the passing of Peter Walwyn. “Big Pete” was old school to the core, and amusingly eccentric with it. Twice UK champion trainer in the 70s, he had in his charge a flashy chestnut by the name of Grundy. (*to page 2*)



*Pat Eddery appreciating Grundy at Ascot.*



*Book cover.*



*Peter Walwyn biography with Grundy/Bustino on the cover RIP.*

### DAVID ALLAN (...cont)

Grundy won the Derby – then the Irish Derby - and headed to the King George as favourite to overcome weight for age and several luminaries including Dahlia, one of the greatest race mares in history.

Dahlia had beaten the boys in both the '73 and '74 “King Georges” not to mention winning half a dozen of France’s top races, the Irish Oaks, two Benson and Hedges Gold Cups (now the Juddmonte International at York) and the Hollywood Invitational, Man o’ War, Canadian International and the Washington DC International over the water. A pioneer of international racing, she travelled 26,000 miles and beat 10 Classic winning colts.

She lined up again in '75 in the colours of Nelson Bunker Hunt. Little did we imagine then that 13 years later she would be Lot 125 at the age of 18 in the enforced dispersal of all the Bunker Hunt brothers stock at Keeneland on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> January 1988. They had got on the wrong side of the silver market and that was that.

Full of excitement and wrapped up warm – it was minus 20 in the wind chill in deep snow with hot chocolate on offer at every turn – I attended the sale in Kentucky of 598 lots including no less than 30 daughters of Vaguely Noble (including Dahlia) and multiple others by The Axe, Grey Dawn, Lyphard, Luthier, Liloy and Blushing Groom. I barely noticed the weather.

Dahlia was in Keeneland’s Barn 27. It was like a shrine. Do you genuflect or bow? Allen Paulsen paid US\$1.1 million to give her a great home.

Back in 1975 at Ascot, however, Dahlia would be outshone not only by Grundy but also by the 4 year old Bustino. He had won the St Leger then at 4 took the Coronation Cup at Epsom, back to a mile and a half.



*Dahlia with Lester Piggott.*

### **DAVID ALLAN (...cont)**

His trainer Dick Hern put not one but two pacemakers into the King George to set a fast gallop designed to run the legs off Grundy.

“Blistering” more like it. The course record was beaten by 2½ seconds, a new mark that stood for 35 years. When Bustino took over from his hares, the ever-stylish Joe Mercer had him clear of Grundy coming out of Swinley Bottom and turning into the straight. Then Pat Eddery mounted a charge up the hill and caught Bustino a furlong and a half out.

From then the battle was titanic. Colossal. Astonishingly brave. Considering how quickly they were still galloping. Quickening, even. Would Grundy sail past Bustino? No.

The 4 year old fought back just about heading Grundy again who then in turn fought harder. In Joe Mercer’s words *“close to the line, my horse changed his legs, his tongue came out and he was done”*. At that extraordinary speed and intensity, he had failed to stay by about 25 yards.

I wouldn’t take anything away from the iconic Affirmed/Alydar duel in the straight in the ’78 Belmont, but the Grundy/Bustino duel was something else. It finished the careers of both of them.

Grundy ran once more – many lengths behind Dahlia

at York, as it happened. Bustino never ran again. Both went to stud. Grundy – by Great Nephew out of a Worden mare – did not distinguish himself and was sold to Japan where he was pampered and polished for all of his days.

Bustino (by Busted by Crepello, more royally bred) went to the Royal Studs where he covered the Queen’s French Oaks Winner Highclere. That tryst produced one of the most influential broodmares in Height of Fashion who became the dam of six full black typers and granddam of a Classic winner and more.

**Sons of this daughter of Bustino included Nashwan, Nayev and Unfuwain, all three becoming successful stallions.**

Peter Walwyn was Leading Trainer in 1975 in both money won and number of winners and Pat Eddery became top jockey just four years after being champion apprentice.

Both remained as gladiators for years to come; the trainer as “Mr Lambourn” where he did much for the racing village and for a great many of its residents.

The turnout for his funeral will bring much of racing together in appreciation. The jockey was as great as great could be. He, too, left us two years ago. With wonderful memories. - tt.

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